



Poetry Recitation & Copywork

Poetry Selections

This session's featured poet is Dan Andersson. We've included four poetry selections for your kids and teens to read, listen to, memorize, and recite. They are:

- Childhood
- Log Fire Smoke I
- The Fiddler
- Homesickness

For copywork, we have included Zaner-Bloser style handwriting sheets for primary, elementary, and cursive, as well as college ruled for older students. The poems we have chosen are:

- Childhood
- Homesickness

"It is better to fight and fall than to live without hope."

~ Snorri Sturluson, The Prose Edda



Dan Andersson

April 6, 1888 - September 16, 1920

Dan Andersson, a Swedish poet, was a master at painting vivid pictures with his words. Born in 1888 in Ludvika, Sweden, Andersson's life was filled with both beauty and hardship, which he reflected in his poetry.

Growing up, his family struggled with poverty, one that would continue to haunt Dan throughout much of his life. He had to work from a very young age, taking up jobs as a teacher and a forestry worker.

At fourteen, his family sent him to the United States to try and find a better life. Dan did his best to eke out a living in Minnesota, but eventually wrote his family stating that he could find no better opportunities there than when he was in Sweden.

He returned to his family in Sweden and began working as a charcoal burner. Regardless of the hardships he faced, Dan's creative spark burned bright, and he wrote many stories and poems during this time. Through his words, he sought out beauty in the world around him and expressed his deepest thoughts and feelings.

Dan's life began to look up when in 1914-1915, he was able to attend a folk high school (a high school for adults) in Brunnsvik. Receiving a higher education gave him the tools to better express himself creatively, and from then on, he became very active in his writing.

Andersson's poems often captured the essence of nature and the struggles of everyday life. He had a special way of describing the world around him, making readers feel as though they were right there with him, experiencing the same sights, sounds, and emotions. His writing was vivid, depicting each detail of the setting he was describing with raw, simplistic beauty.

One of Andersson's most famous works is *Kolvaktarens Visor* (The Charcoal Burner's Songs), a collection of poems that tells the story of a charcoal burner and his life in the Swedish countryside. This collection was likely inspired by Dan's own time as a charcoal worker. Through these poems, Andersson explored themes of love, loss, and the beauty of nature.

He published two other collections in his lifetime- *Kolarhistorier* and *Svarta Ballader*, yet none of them gained recognition while he was living. In fact, when he was publishing *Svarta Ballader*, his final poetry collection, Dan faced such difficulty in finding a publisher that he accepted 25 copies of his book as his only payment in order to get it published. Despite this, Andersson continued to create, fueled by a passion for his craft.

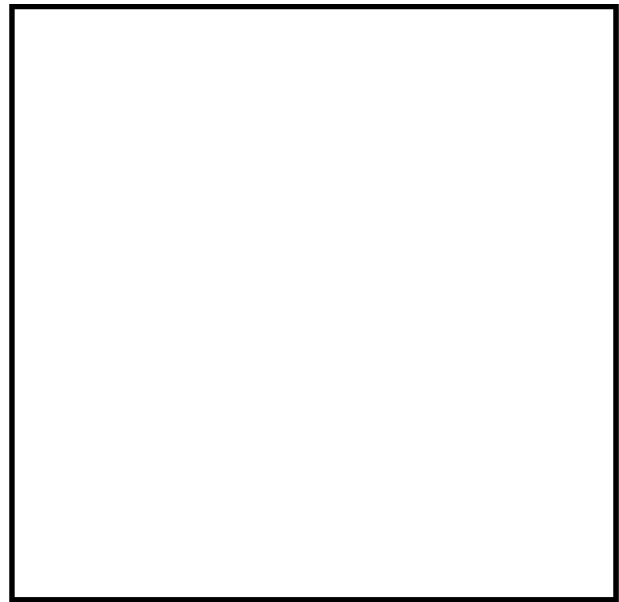
Tragically, Andersson's life was cut short at the age of 32 when he died in 1920 of an accidental poisoning. However, after his death, Andersson's work gained massive fame in Sweden, becoming one of the most well-known poets in Swedish history and being set to music by many artists. His poetry is still widely read and taught in schools, beloved for its celebration of the landscapes of Sweden and the everyday lives of its people. Through his words, he painted vivid pictures that continue to resonate with readers to this day.

Poet Study

Poet: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Place of Birth: _____



3 Facts About the Poet:

Best Known Poems by the Poet:

Dan Andersson Selections

Childhood

Oh, childhood, oh glorious dream-filled time,
When the world was sunny and hopeful and kind!
How often while miserable, lonely with grime
When I'm drinking I do so in order to find
A way back to the wonderful kingdom of dreams,
Full of palaces, castles and glory,
Where each of my friends is a beacon who beams
And where wild nymphets dance oh so freely.
No obstacles to my happiness stand,
No blockage to travelling free. –
What matter the limits today in this land?
No, my childhood comes back to me. –
I'm tired and I wish once again to reside
In that town, in the heather to sleep.
To dream of chambers golden and wide,
And eternal youth ever to keep.
Oh, let me now slumber as sunset draws nigh
Once more as in days of my youth!
Oh, sing now, thou fir tree, oh thrush now do sigh,
For I am once more just the child of my truth. –
I then lean my head against a tree in the glen,
Release fear and fight from my chest.
Oh, murmur thou birches, oh whisper amen –
And sing me to eternal rest.

Log Fire Smoke I

In the dark depths of forests eternal,
where the steep and gray rock face presides
where the dizzying infinite heather,
and the silent days softly reside,
there, the burning hot fermenting log-fire
makes a bonfire volcanic with dust
and from hundreds of crevices tiny
its gray smoke rises high to the sky.
All around it a guard, black, nocturnal
with eyes blaring porcelain white.
He perspires and battles his hunger
In his bouts with the wintertime nights.
Every fire that burns is fire,
even hidden as if it were dead,
every fire is truly fire,
even when it is not flaming red.
Still it glows down below,
burning in the ravine,
just to appear as flames,
at night when unseen.
Thus does glow, thus does burn
our hate and hope for earthly goods,
the gentle smoke plumes rising
and resting on the still woods.
Thus rise the hidden folk tunes
out of earth and out of fire,
to wend their way all dreamily
o'er the scraggly mountain gyre.
It is naught but smoke, it is traces
of a spirit aroused to the core –
it is gray, it is doused,
it has vanished, it is log-fire smoke – but
nothing more.

Dan Andersson Selections

The Fiddler

I'm a fiddler and I'll play at both weddings and deaths,
in the sunshine, the rain, when the moon takes your breath.
I shall listen to no one, and play as I will
for I play to forget I am on this earth still.
I'll do no harvest labor, not rye and not flax,
for the hand the bow harbors must be kept smooth as wax.
You must not call me lazy, you must not scorn my name
'cause I'd rather go hungry and just live with the shame.
I will not dig the fields, I will not chop the wood,
I will dream 'neath the cherry and not worry for food.
When the sky's red at twilight I shall raise my fiddle high
And play 'til you're all dizzy and not an eye's dry.
I shall play as you bury your beloved in the soil,
I shall play all your grief in a tune with no mirth.
And the sorrow of death which has visited you,
Will gush forth like your mourning direct from my bow.
I shall wander hill and dale during long autumn nights,
In the smoke of myriad log fires I shall sing with all my might.
And as the pitch darkness lays its mist o'er the fen
My bass voice will echo through humanity's den.
I have three strings of sorrow - for the fourth one it gave,
In with a tremor at my dearest friend's grave.
And until my own death day I will follow you with songs -
Await death and be playing on resurrection day long.

Homesickness

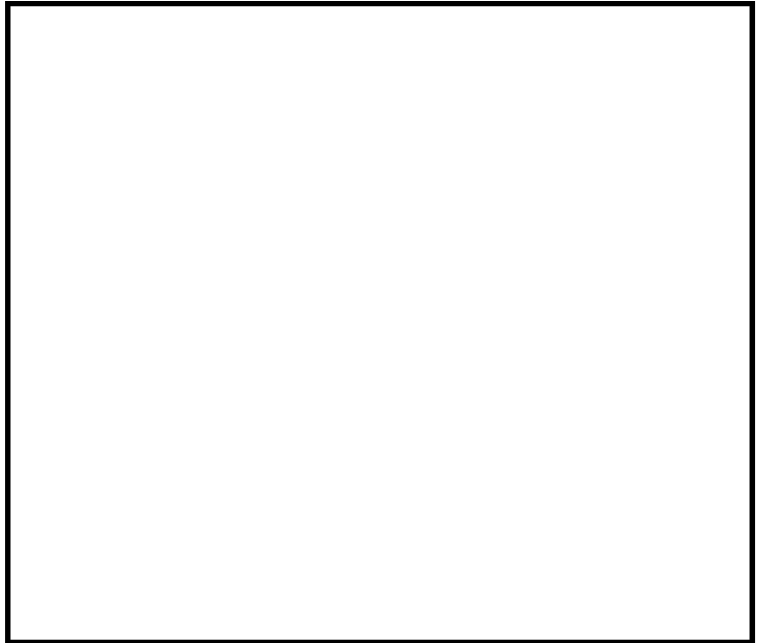
I am tired, I am dulled by the factory,
I would go to my home in brown earth,
to my cabin by the Blodsten bog,
to the peace of the coves of my birth.
I would live on bread and water,
if only I could soon exchange
the city lights and hubub for the night
where the peaceful hours range.
I wish my way to the dale at Pajso,
to the grassy bog at So,
where the dark green depths of the forest
round the mossy fields do grow,
where the sedge grass stands in the meadow
where the springs purl white as milk
and the roots of the flora are woven
into fabric as fine as silk.
I long for the valley at Kango
where red heather adorns the earth
and its flames burn in silent resistance
to the threat of autumnal death -
where the lovely, spritely butterflies
hover on dust-covered wings
and the bumblebee laden with pollen
to the plants does firmly cling.
I wish to be back with poor people
who live by the sweat of their brow,
who labor in summer and battle
cold and misery in winter like now . -
I wish to be back where the clouds skim
through the sky where the stars also shine
and where wilderness rivers gush at whim
keeping time with these new songs of mine.

Poetry Study

Title:

Type of Poem:

Use the box to at right to draw a picture of what the poem brings to mind.



Write one thing you liked and did not like about the poem:

Write three adjectives about the poem.

Compose a few lines of your own poem inspired by this work
